MOXLEY ON THE GOP'S ANTI-TRUMP RESISTANCE | "SHADY" ADS TARGET ROHRABACHER'S GREATEST THREAT
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up front

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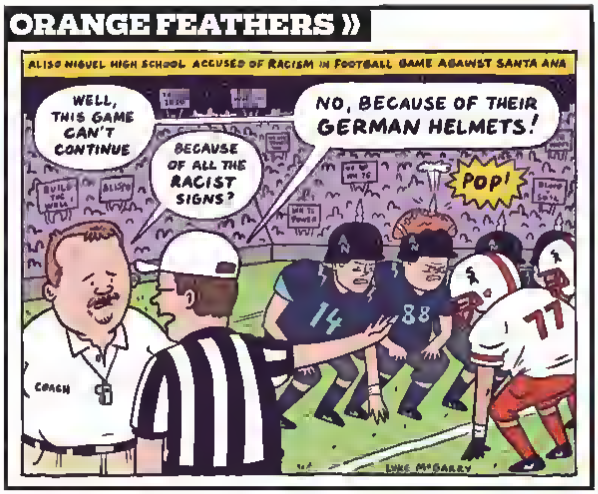
Illustration by LJ Santanello
Design by Richie Beckman

ORANGE FEATHERS »


ALISO NIGUEL HIGH SCHOOL ACCUSED OF RACISM IN FOOTBALL GAME AGAINST SANTA ANA
WELL, THIS GAME CAN'T CONTINUE
BECAUSE OF ALL THE RACIST SIGNS?
NO, BECAUSE OF THEIR GERMAN HELMETS!
POP!
COACH
LUKE McGARRY

OC WEEKLY

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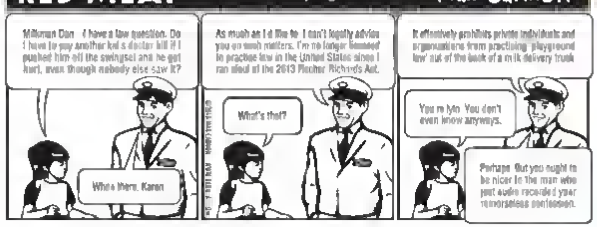
RED MEAT

hand-pumped silt from the once-rich wellspring of humor

from the secret files of Max Cannon


Millorun Dan - I have a law question. Do I have to pay another kid a dollar bill if I pushed him off the swingset and he got hurt, even though nobody else saw it?
Where there, Karen
As much as I'd like to, I can't legally advise you on such matters. I'm no longer licensed to practice law in the United States since I ran afoul of the 2013 Fischer Richards Act.
What's that?
It effectively prohibits private individuals and organizations from practicing 'playground law' out of the back of a mini delivery truck
You're lyin. You don't even know anyways.
Perhaps. But you ought to be nicer to the man who just audio recorded your nonsensical confession.

Donald Trump Is 'Burning'

Meet the hardball California Republican strategist who takes on the president

RICHIE REICKMAN

For decades, Orange County's Jimmy Camp served as a prized political consultant not only for California's conservatives, but also for the likes of Utah Senator Orrin Hatch. Camp's Democrat counterparts see him as a triple threat: inexhaustible, creative and fearless. He once donned a chicken outfit to publicly tail an opponent who was dodging debates. But the unimaginable happened in July 2016, when he left his GOP home hours before Donald Trump's presidential nomination. Not a man who sugarcoats his views, he called Trump "a narcissistic, self-centered, unprincipled, miserable example of a human being."

»R. SCOTT MOXLEY

We recently checked in with Camp on life in the "never Trump" world and to see if there's been a change of heart.

OC WEEKLY *Compare your outlook on Trump at the time of his election with your stance today*

JIMMY CAMP: He's proven himself to be exactly what I said two years ago.

Was there a precise moment during the 2016 campaign when he lost you, or was your frustration incremental?

He lost me at hello. From the moment he announced, he was running a carnival act. Unfortunately, he's now turned the presidency, the White House and our standing in the world into a carnival act.

Is there substantial hidden opposition to Trump in California Republican circles?

Most Republican leaders/elected officials would admit privately Trump is a con man and that he has no integrity. But they don't have the spines to speak out in fear of being punished or losing their next election or party position.

You often use Twitter to mock Trump. I like to question his intelligence. He's so fucking stupid. He'll never read my tweets, and I'm under no illusion he would respond. It's mostly to taunt his supporters. It's rare that one of my Republican friends will defend him. But I do have white supremacists who will flame me on Twitter. It's extremely fulfilling to get criticized by a racist.

What offends you most about the president?

His blatant dishonesty and the fact that he fully expects to be believed.

Is there a line even he can't cross without jeopardizing his base?

We thought it was a joke when he said he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue and not lose any voters, but apparently not. I think if the Stormy Daniels affair had come out early in the primary, he may have been shut down. Republicans have been slowly anesthetized to his bad behavior. From going after a Gold Star family to saying McCain wasn't a hero to the "pussy grabbing" tape. It's been a slow burn, and it's gotten to the point where party became more important than country and integrity. Republicans knew what they were getting and accepted it.

Have your political principles evolved since, say, 1996?

I've always believed in small government, been fiscally conservative, and I think that people will step up and be their best when left alone by government. That's the conservative side of my yin and yang. But I also have always supported marriage equality, protecting our planet and natural resources, and I believe that people shouldn't be criminalized for coming to this country to try to make a better life for themselves—my progressive side. I would say that after 30 years of yielding to my conservative side and helping elect people that were in absolute opposition to my progressive stances, in the Trump era, I'm looking through a different lens. What's more important? People having a few more bucks in their pocket, reducing the national debt, balancing the budget? Or people's basic human rights being trampled on, mothers separated from their children, our planet being decimated and a president with dog-whistle tactics of racial divide that sets our country back decades?

Though a successful consultant, how much business have you lost because of your outspokenness?

I've lost about 80 percent of my business. Four years ago, I had five or six targeted Republican campaigns. This year, I have zero.

Would you use your skills to help defeat Trump and Trump supporters in upcoming elections?

I'll do anything to defeat Trump. Right here in OC alone, there are several congressional races, a state senate race, an assembly race and a mayor's race in Anaheim where the Democrats are going all-in—districts I've worked for years and know like the back of my hand. They can't win any of those seats without Republican votes. Would I help them do that? Hell yeah. (Call me.)

Do you have predictions about November's elections as well as the 2020 presidential campaign?

If Democrats stop talking about impeachment, they'll win the house and possibly the senate. And if they do, they should let everything play out for the 2020 election. Let Trump be Trump, and stop throwing gas on a body that's already burning.

RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

POLITICAL FOOTBALL

» STEVE LOWERY

Indianapolis Colts v. Washington Say-It-to-My-Face-I-Dare-You's

Indianapolis update: Indiana is, of course, the "Hoosier State." What's a Hoosier? No one seems to know. Oh, the answer is probably out there, it's just that who wants to take the time to find out something about Indiana. It's an odd state. Though it lays claim to being a bastion of rock-ribbed Midwestern values, those values apparently include a real affection for meth. The state regularly ranks near the top nationally for meth labs—one was discovered in a Wal-Mart bathroom. So perhaps Hoosier stands for "Hoosier dealer?" or "Hoosier got to blow around here to get some sweet, sweet meth?" The state is also home to the 12th largest concentration of Nickelback fans, so it's not surprising that according to a condom industry survey, the state's male population has the ninth smallest average penis size in the country. Speaking of small dicks: Mike Pence.

Washington, D.C., update: It's not surprising that Washington, D.C., where the NFL franchise has the most disgusting, despicable name this side of "Celtics," is home to some of the most disgusting, despicable names such as "presidential adviser," "presidential adviser now under investigation," "presidential adviser makes deal with prosecutors" and "Supreme Court nominee." The latter is a brown-nosed beauty named Brett Kavanaugh who resembles the kind of guy who showed up to high school each day in a tie and would inform the teacher he forgot to assign homework, then lie when asked if he did that. So, naturally, Kavanaugh was selected by Donald Trump to sit on the nation's highest court. Kavanaugh has the kind of spineless, amoral qualities Trump values so much in a Supreme Court nominee, Speaker of the House and son.

Upon further review: Mike Pence, the former Indiana governor and current best argument against impeaching Trump, is suspected of being the author of an anonymous op-ed in *The New York Times* claiming there is a resistance movement in the White House. Pence is suspected because the word "lodestar" appears in the piece. Lodestar is a favorite phrase of Pence's—along with "Ewww! Gay's is icky!"—and refers to someone or something that guides or inspires, though, lodestar, actually Lode Star, would be a terrific porn name. (Though not for Pence, you know, since he's got that twee Indiana ween.)

Root for: Washington ... and, if you're a fella, all of your current girlfriend's/boyfriend's exes were from Indiana.

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dana watch»

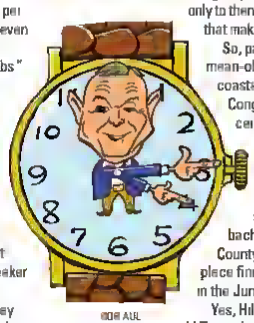
Throwing Some 'Shady'

» MATT COKER

Harley Rouda, the Democrat challenging 15-term incumbent Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R-Putin's Slim Jim), "outsourced American jobs to China", made "millions of dollars from sweatshop labor", paid those workers "$5 a day," amounting to $35 per week because they toiled "seven days a week", and "got rich while Americans lost their jobs."

Those are the allegations in the video advertisement "Shady," which begins with the voiceover "There's something shady about Harley Rouda."

The commercial was paid for by the Congressional Leadership Fund, a super political-action committee affiliated with House Speaker Paul Ryan that doled out $10 million in ads before Labor Day to attack Democrats in the tightest House races. Why? To prevent the lower chamber's flip from red to blue.



BOB AUL

What's interesting is the Laguna Beach businessman was a registered Republican for decades, including when all this "shadiness" happened. Rouda donated money to Ohio Governor John Kasich's unsuccessful run for the GOP presidential nomination in 2016. The real-estate executive who wants to save Obamacare still opposes rent control.

Bernie, he ain't. Rouda is Mitt Romney, the Republican Rohrabacher supported not only in 2012, when the former Massachusetts governor and GOP nominee lost to incumbent President Barack Obama—but also in 2008, when the late Senator John McCain (R-Arizona) ultimately got the party's nod.

Think about it: When have you ever heard Republicans knock one of their own for being affiliated with companies that outsource jobs, rely on sweatshop labor or make killings while most other Americans suffer financially? Romney was also accused of causing American job losses through layoffs or acquiring companies only to then shut them down. To the GOP that makes him "a winner."

So, painting Rouda with the mean-ol'-businessman brush in coastal Orange County's 48th Congressional District is insincere—and brilliant. Republicans hold a 10 percent registration advantage in the district, which was reflected in the amount of support frontrunner Rohrabacher and former Orange County GOP chairman and fourth-place finisher Scott Baugh received in the June primary.

Yes, Hillary Clinton beat Donald Trump by 2 percent in the 48th in November 2016, but Rohrabacher on the same ballot won re-election by 16 percentage points. Let's say Republicans who voted for Baugh sit out the general election and anti-Trump sentiments fire up enough opposition to make the Rouda-Rohrabacher race a toss-up. Actually, that's how it stands, according to a *New York Times* poll.

Still, the GOP base in the 48th is what it is, so seeding doubts in the minds of new voters, independents and even progressives is what the "Shady" Rouda ads are all about. It's a race to the bottom, people.

Got Dana Watch fodder? Email mcoker@ocweekly.com

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Just Payless

You are the Houston-based rental car agency who took my reservation for an 8 p.m. Friday pickup and, when I arrived as scheduled for my mid-size sedan, had closed an hour earlier. That forced me to scramble in an airport, city and state I had never been in to find a rental company that was not only open, but also still had cars available. Fortunately, the fine folks at Payless Car Rental—that's Payless; ask for it by name—were open, and they were sympathetic to my sob story and got me a Chevy Nova for about the same cost. Original car-rental company? You're dead to me.

BOB AUL

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey, You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.

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APOCALYPSE NO

Flor Edwards survived the notorious Children of God doomsday cult, turning her pain into a poignant book about survival and healing

BY MARC BALLON

Photos courtesy of Flor Edwards. Illustrations By LJ Santanello

FLOR (SECOND FROM RIGHT) POSES WITH HER SISTERS IN A THAI DANCE TROUPE

SMILES HIDE THE STORY

The year was 2010. The setting was my intermediate print-journalism class at Cal State Fullerton. Flor Edwards, one of my students, was part of my "Love, Sex and Romance" mock press conference. Three volunteer female student panelists stood before the class taking questions from their male classmates about all things love, sex and romance. Then, the female students would interrogate three male panelists. Afterward, students had to write an article about what transpired.

Over the years, I heard so many lurid questions and responses that nothing surprised me—until I met Flor. Her ribald tales about her scandalous childhood and experimental adulthood that included relationships with women and the occasional threesome made her classmates' midnight confessions seem positively tame.

Who was this provocateur hiding in plain sight?

Flor, perhaps my best writing student, had mastered the fine art of politely but firmly keeping her distance.

During the course of the semester, I picked up a few interesting tidbits. Her mother was Swedish, Flor had 11 brothers and sisters, and UC Berkeley had accepted her, but she decided to go to CSUF.

Oh, and Flor had grown up in the notorious Children of God cult, the same one that had stolen the childhoods of Joaquin Phoenix, his late brother River Phoenix and Rose McGowan. When Flor was a little girl, the doomsday cult, beset with allegations of incest, allegations of adult-child sex and widespread psychological abuse, had prophesied that the world would end in 1993. Flor lived in terror that she would die at age 12.

After she graduated, Flor and I kept in touch sporadically. I wrote her a letter of recommendation for creative-writing programs at UC Riverside and Columbia University, both accepted her for graduate school. Occasionally, we dropped each other a line.

She reappeared in my life earlier this year, after authoring *Apocalypse Child, A Life in End Times*. Her wrenching memoir details the isolation, frequent beatings and emotional abuse she experienced as a child in a cult that preached free love, "flirty fishing" and an apocalypse that never came. Flor had quite a story to tell, replete with false prophets, absentee parents, suicide attempts and redemption.

We met at the now-closed Classic Rock Coffee in Fullerton, the first of many conversations. Her dirty-blond hair framing her youthful face, Flor, now 36, looked strong, healthy and happy, much as she had as my student nearly a decade earlier. We discussed how liberated she felt in writing and sharing her story with the world as Led Zeppelin blasted in the background.

Still, she had her moments. "I occasionally get mad because of certain struggles I face. It's like having an invisible disability," Flor confided. "People look at me and think I'm normal, but they don't understand the struggles I have."

The evolution of the Children of God from a haven for lost hippies to an oppressive, abusive cult sheds light on Flor's traumatic journey from abused child to broken teenager to healing grownup.

David Brandt Berg came from a long line of evangelical Christians. At a young age, he struggled with his sexual urges. When he was 3, his mother caught the future founder and leader of the Children of God masturbating in church, Flor writes in *Apocalypse Child*. His mom allegedly ordered him to finish the act in front of his father. As a young preacher, Berg claimed he had experienced sexual desire for his mother in his early 20s while the two

shared a hotel during one of their evangelical missions

Berg struggled with his unholy sexual urges. Eventually, he came up with a new paradigm that abolished guilt and celebrated sin as a pathway to forgiveness. One of his founding principles. "Anything done in the name of God is pure and good and should be celebrated and condoned." Berg's new belief system encouraged sexual freedom and unconditional love, an attractive tonic for the spiritual seekers to whom he would later minister.

In 1968, the then-49-year-old Berg established the Children of God in Huntington Beach. Many of the drug-addled hippies of the day seemed lost to him. Father David, as he now called himself, believed that God ordained him to save them from eternal damnation. With his message of free love and salvation and a promise to return humanity back to the Garden of Eden, he attracted new followers, a veritable youthful brigade. They formed a singing group called Teens for Christ and performed locally. And they had lots and lots of sex.

If you lived through the '60s and didn't join a band or a cult, then you didn't really live through the '60s. "Jesus Christ, it was

THE FAMILY THAT BUSKS TOGETHER

the '60s!" Flor said with a laugh.

In the late '70s, Flor's mother joined the Children of God after meeting a member she described as "having eyes that were full of light." He strummed a guitar on a street corner and told her about Jesus. Other members made her feel accepted as never before. She dumped her fiancé and life in Sweden and joined the group, eventually making her way to Spain.

Halfway across the world, Flor's father had dropped out of UC Davis just two weeks before he would have graduated at the top of his class as a geology major to instead follow his five older siblings into Children of God. A while later, Flor's parents met and fell in love in Majorca, Spain.

Even at the height of the Children of God's Age of Aquarius, dark clouds gathered.

When they joined, Flor's parents, like all members, gave up all possessions at Father David's behest. They also severed relationships with "systemites," or evil ones, which included anybody outside the group such as "unenlightened" parents and grandparents.

To recruit new members and fill the cult's coffers, Father David encouraged young female members to seduce wealthy men and turn them on to the Children of God. The practice, which the group abandoned after a spate of bad press, was known as "flirty fishing." Flor's older brother came out of such a union.

Flor and her identical-twin sister Tamar were born in 1981, the fourth and fifth of her mother's 12 children. (Father David discouraged birth control, so Children of God could breed more "End-Time" soldiers to fight against evil.) Because the amount of children gradually began to outnumber adults, the cult grew far more restrictive and repressive.

"Any time you have to control another person, that's when things became more structured and more deliberate," Flor said. "I think in the beginning, it was much more free and impulsive."

That certainly wasn't Flor's or her siblings' experience in the Children of God.

While in hiding, Father David communicated with his followers through long-winded letters. His adult foot soldiers told cult children what to think, read, watch and even feel. "A clandestine cult with 20 children to a room, no outside music, movies or books; and no contact beyond the compound. For the first 15 years of my life, this was my normal," Flor writes in *Narratively*, a digital publication focusing on in-depth storytelling.

In 1985, Father David declared the United States was a whore and encouraged followers to leave the West and preach to the developing world. He said he had a revelation from God that the world would end in 1993. The U.S. and other western nations would be the first to burn in hell. Flor, her family and other cult members all had spots in heaven and could take whomever was willing to join them. Only 144,000 believers, according to Father David, would find salvation.

Flor and her expanding family soon moved to Thailand to "witness"—sing songs, dance, preach the gospel and beg for donations. Over the next seven years, they moved every six months to a new compound that isolated them behind high walls topped with barbed wire.

Flor became obsessed with death. She calculated that her life would end before her 13th birthday. Despite promises of a heavenly afterlife, Flor often thought about how she would die before her "rebirth" and how much pain she would have to endure.

"I knew for sure that I was going to heaven since I was one of God's children, but the threshold to get there seemed insurmountable," Flor writes in *Narratively*.

She began to think about all the possible ways that she could die—primitive ways that she'd heard about, mostly from the Bible stories or movies such as *The Ten Commandments* or *Jesus of Nazareth*. "I formulated elaborate images [in] my mind of being burned at the stake like Joan of Arc," she said. "Being crucified upside-down, where the head fills with blood and slowly bursts, being beheaded like John the Baptist; or stoned to death like the prostitutes in the Bible stories or movies we'd watch."

She eventually prayed that she would get shot, thinking it the quickest and most painless way to go.

Flor and other cult children also lived in constant fear of brutal beatings for minor "infractions"—or for no reason at all. The adults, she said, wanted to control the young ones and did so using hateful words or their fists. Punishments were doled out using a demerit chart. "We became accustomed to scheduled punishments or humiliations, often without knowing what we had done wrong," Flor said. "We also became quite used to unexpected and erratic outbursts of discipline."

Two incidents stand out for their cruelty.

One night, "Uncle Peter" was reading bedtime stories from the "Heaven's Girl" series, "an apocalyptic sex comic book," in Flor's words. As he read, a girl on the bottom bunk began tugging at Flor's leg. She tried to ignore the girl, but hurly Uncle Peter noticed that Flor had momentarily stopped paying attention. He made his way toward her.

"I didn't have time to think before he lifted me in the air. He held me by my arms. My shoulders froze. My legs dangled," Flor writes. "He slammed me down on the bed. I landed on my tailbone. Shock waves shot up my spine. My brain went numb and tingly. My throat dried up. I wanted to cry, but I couldn't. For a moment, my whole world stopped with that slam to my tailbone."

Then Uncle Peter calmly picked up the book and continued reading.

Another time, 9-year-old Flor had accumulated a total of five check marks next to her name on a demerit chart, indicating the vices of disobedience, foolishness, defiance, disorderly conduct and pride—big no-nos. She was told that after lunch, her beloved Uncle Paul would punish her with a wooden paddle, even though she wasn't sure what she'd done wrong.

Before the beating, Uncle Paul handed Flor a giant ladybug pillow to muffle her screams. Flor asked him if her mother sanctioned the punishment. Uncle Paul told the terrified Flor that her mom considered this "the best course of action." He began beating her buttocks with such force that her legs gave way beneath her.

"I was beginning to see that the adults, Mom and Dad included, would take whatever measure necessary to keep us in line and loyal to Father David's teachings," Flor writes. "I began to withdraw further and further inside myself, unable to handle both the fear of death that was always with me and now recognition of what adults were turning into."

Sexual abuse and allegations of incest have long surrounded the Children of God, now known as the Family. Father David countenanced not only free love, but also sex between adults and children, at least for the cult's first few years.

Father David also had a hankering for young girls. He kept a private stash of videos of scarf-clad girls dancing pro-

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

APOCALYPSE NO

» FROM PAGE 11

vocatively. By age 7, Flor knew the basics of how to sexually satisfy both men and women from reading Father David's explicit letters.

Though she never experienced sexual abuse, Flor heard many stories over the years about molested Children of God girls and witnessed inappropriate behavior herself. In her book, she writes of hearing moaning adults in walled-off rooms having orgies. Then there was the masturbating 9-year-old.

Somehow, this hyper-sexualized little girl had found a way to get herself off. And she wasn't shy about doing it when the grownups were away. So, Flor and the other girls in the house, about 20 in all, hatched a plan to trick her. They pretended to join her, all simulating masturbation, encouraging the girl to let herself go, to really go for it. As she furiously touched herself and neared ecstasy, the other girls began to mock her until the little girl broke down in tears.

The bullying had little to do with onanism.

"Hurt people, hurt people," Flor said. "Because of the environment we were in, it kind of turned into *Lord of the Flies*. The girl was weak, so, we ganged up on her."

The year 1993 came and went with the world still intact; Father David's prophecy proved false. The charismatic cult leader found a way to spin it, though. God, he told his followers, was pleased with their work and gave them an "extension." Flor began having her doubts.

Father David encouraged followers to come back home, reversing his earlier edict that they flee the West because of its sinful ways. Flor and her family returned to Southern California.

Father David died on Oct. 1, 1994. With his passing, the bonds that so connected Flor's parents to the cult began to fray. With so many mouths to feed, they became more concerned with supporting their family. Flor's brother John left first. Then Flor and two of her sisters told their mother they wanted out. Surprisingly, she conceded. "We just want what's best for you. And if that's what you want, then that's fine," her mother said.

Flor, Tamar and their older sister Mary Ann were also allowed to enroll in a home-school program. "I was 14 years old and had never attended a real school," Flor writes. "This was my first step toward a normal future."

Not exactly.

Having never spoken to children outside the cult, Flor had little idea how to interact with classmates. She finally decided to befriend a cool girl named Kristen, who wore flannel shirts, jeans and other trendy clothes. Flor wrote her a note. "Dear Kristen, I would like to be your friend…"

Kristen read it, looked at Flor and never spoke to her again.

Flor's awkward and failed attempt at friendship was the first of many social missteps. Growing up cut off from the outside world, Flor didn't know how to interact with people or have a healthy relationship. She had no knowledge of popular culture and zero social skills. For much of her life, the Children of God, damaging as it was, had given her structure and stability; it taught her what to wear, what to eat, what to listen to and what to think.

Now, Flor could make her own choices. She was free—or was she?

"It wasn't so much growing up in a cult that was difficult," Flor said. "It was actually coming into the world."

Flor's difficulty in adjusting to modern American social norms manifested itself her first day at Rowland High School. Her Spanish teacher sent her home from school for wearing a blouse that showed too much cleavage. He said she could only return if she wore something more modest. "I did not understand the proper rules of dress code," Flor writes in *Narratively*. "Showing a little cleavage was no big deal to my teenage mind."

But learning that she had been in a cult was. A few days later, Flor stopped by the local library and thumbed through an issue of *Seventeen* magazine. Black bold letters read, "Did you grow up in a cult?"

Did you grow up in a secluded environment? Check. Under the influence of a charismatic leader? Check. Coerced to recruit members to the group? Check. Taught that the outside world was a forbidden place? Check.

"For the next few weeks after taking the *Seventeen* quiz," Flor writes, "the words ran like a mantra through my mind. 'Oh

my God . . . I grew up in a cult. . . . Where do I go from here?"

The answer was downhill.

Flor had suspected she had grown up in a cult, and now she had proof. She shared the horrific news with some of her siblings. Like her, they reacted with rage and rebelliousness, channeling much of that anger toward their parents—and themselves. They felt like outcasts. "I started coming home from school drunk," Flor writes in *Apocalypse Child*. "I would shout at Mom and Dad, 'You raised us in a cult! How could you? I hate you! I should've never been born! You should've never had any of us!'"

Flor descended into a life of booze and drugs to medicate her inner turmoil. She ended up getting kicked out of high school twice for alcohol and weed, despite maintaining a 4.0 GPA. At her alternative school, she and Tamar—who had also been expelled and was on a path of self-destruction—witnessed bloody fights among gang bangers. They did more drugs and alcohol to numb the pain.

After Flor's "friend" smashed a lunch box on her head in a jealous, drunken rage, Flor had had enough. She grabbed a handful of aspirin one night and washed the pills down with vodka. "I had grown up in a world where I was prohibited from making decisions," Flor writes. "But there's one freedom we have as humans. It's the will to live or die."

Flor didn't die, although she did spend a long night throwing up in the toilet. Her near-death experience gave her a renewed will to live.

After surviving her suicide attempt, Flor cleaned up and returned to high school and graduated with honors. Enrolling in junior college, Flor took an English course that required a 10-page research paper. She knew exactly what she wanted to write about. "As I started to write, I discovered my childhood was a gold mine for material, no longer a piece of my past weighing down on me," Flor writes in *Apocalypse Child*. "It had color and texture. Darkness and tragedy, too, but most of all, I had something to work with. Like a potter uses clay, I had material with which to form stories. When I wrote, I had a voice, something I never had growing up."

Her professor gave Flor an A. She promised him that she would one day write a book about her experiences.

And so she has. *Kirkus Reviews* calls *Apocalypse Child* "an impressive religious memoir—candid and inspiring without being sensationalistic or self-pitying." *Publishers Weekly* says the book is a "wrenching testimony about a complicated childhood reclaimed." *Foreward Reviews* praises it as "an engrossing account of growing up within the strangely insular Children of God cult."

The process of putting her thoughts on paper, of reliving the myriad traumas she suffered in the cult, was more difficult than Flor could've possibly imagined. She began penning her memoir in 2005, Turner Publishing Co. put it out 13 years later—nearly the same amount of time that Flor had spent in Children of God.

She wrote to take control of her story, to understand what happened to her and to heal. "I sometimes cried while writing. There were times I almost couldn't work, but finishing this book had a cathartic effect," Flor said. "I think when you go through something traumatic, there's a technique in the military where they actually make you sit there and listen to the sounds of bombs. I kind of did that through my memories." And she's not done. Flor hopes to write another book, perhaps about her life after the cult, perhaps something entirely different. She's not sure. What Flor does know, though, is that she has finally found her voice. Life is good. Her relationship with her parents is stronger than ever, her bitterness toward them long since dissipated. Flor has never felt more optimistic, more confident and more capable. She feels proud of and validated by *Apocalypse Child*'s reception.

Still, the scars of growing up in the Children of God remain, even if mostly hidden.

Three of Flor's sisters' whereabouts are unknown, Flor has lost touch with them. She says she never wants to have her own kids: "After what happened to me, there's no way I was going to bring a child into this world." She has no intention of marriage, a result of her inability to fully trust others or to plan too far into the future. Or perhaps, Flor said, just because she never learned to live in the fantasy of fairy tales, her life was a wholly different kind of fiction.

Given her lack of socialization as a child, her anxieties as an adult could paralyze her—if she permitted them to.

"I can't let myself go there. It would be such a deep, dark vortex. There would be no coming out," Flor said. "I have to literally fight sometimes to keep myself afloat. But that makes life interesting.

"As my mom said, 'I was born to be a fighter'"

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COURTESY OF INTERSCOPE RECORDS

fri/09/14

[DRAG]

GENDER BENDING FUN

Drag-drogynous Drag Show

The LGBT Center OC is hosting a dress-up party to rival any drag brunch in the neighborhood. This is Drag-drogynous, and for the price of admission, guests can enjoy a series of spirited, campy, sparkling drag dances and performances, along with food and drink. It's like drag for a cause, with the cause being to get LGBT Center OC's YETA (Youth Empowered to Act) members to this January's Creating Change Conference in Detroit. The conference, started in 1988, is dedicated to inspiring, supporting, advising and bringing together the LGBTQ community and friends. Come for a show and support a movement.

Drag-drogynous Drag Show at LGBT Center on 4th, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 953-5428; www.lgbtcenteroc.org. 7 p.m. $10-$30. —ERIN DEWITT

[FILM]

On the Big Screen

Crown and Anchor

Punk-rock music can be quite invigorating—even more so when it's used to punctuate the emotional landscape of a story based on depressing subject matter. *Crown and Anchor* is the feature-film debut of writer/director/editor Andrew Rowe. The film centers on the relationship between cousins James and Danny. When James, who lives a straight-edge lifestyle as a result of growing up with an abusive alcoholic father, crosses paths with his estranged cousin (who is drowning in a world of substance abuse), the reunion does not bode well. This crime drama will screen at Long Beach's Art Theatre, and dare we say, it promises to be a hardcore film with a soundtrack that includes Gorilla Biscuits, Youth of Today, Johnny Thunders and the Heartbreakers, Project X, Side By Side, X-Ray Spex, ho9909, and DYS.

Crown and Anchor at Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435, arttheatrelongbeach.org. 10:30 p.m. $11.50; seniors/children, $8.50. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

sat/09/15

[LITERARY EVENTS]

PRINT MATTERS

Long Beach Zine Fest

Less than a month after the Anaheim-based OC Zine Fest, Long Beach Zine Fest comes to a new location but with the same intent to connect Southern California-based self-publishers, writers, artists and DIY enthusiasts with their non-SoCal brethren. Just as in the years that preceded, this is a LB-heavy event, featuring music by Meow Twins, Saint Shivers, the Black Noise, and more, a makerspace hosted by the Studio at the Long Beach Public Library; workshops; a vegan food court by Green Saturday LA; and even a free bike valet. Bring plenty of cash, and plan to make a day out of this fun-filled event—with more than 120 vendors, you're bound to find plenty of goodies with which to enjoy the thrill of reading printed material.

Long Beach Zine Fest at Expo Arts Center, 4321 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach. lbzinefest.com. 11 a.m. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

[FOOD & DRINK]

Design-ated Drinking

OC Brew Ha Ha

Celebratory, tasteful and also safety-conscious, the producers of the ninth-annual OC Brew Ha Ha are committed to helping you get to unlimited pours—or close to it—with more than 100 designer-, craft- and imported-beer vendors eager to please and impress. Situated in the pastoral hop-happy hills of the Santa Ana-range-adjacent Irvine Lake, they'll provide you a tasting glass, entertainment, shuttle service and parking, with a discount for the unhoppy but stalwart non-drinking friend who chaperones you. Food-truck fare helps everybody stay sober as well as nicely complements the ales, stouts, lagers, pilsners, bocks and more. For extra credit, you can sit on in an educational seminar with industry experts.

OC Brew Ha Ha at Lakeview Park, 5303 E. Santiago Canyon Rd., Silverado, (949) 363-1774, www.ocbrewhaha.com. Noon. $45-$70. 21+. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

sun/09/16

[CONCERT]

All A-GØGG

GØGGS

GØGGS' just-about-out full-length *Pre-Strike Sweep* is merciless Roessler/Stevenson-era Black Flag dissonance and Chrome-style synth streaks and sci-fi paranoia, delivered with hammer-down hardcore-punk power and velocity. It's lean, mean, anxious and angry, and it's hard to believe it's all coming from just four people. GØGGS is OC alums Ty Segall and Charles Mootheart, both of whom have long and worthy discographies, along with flamethrower Ex-Cult front man Chris Shaw—and is that Segall and Mootheart's old Epsilons bandmate Michael Anderson on bass? (Apologies to Michael Anderson if it's not *that* Michael Anderson.) Anyway—this is still a beast, and a ferocious one, too.

GØGGS at Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com. 8 p.m. $13 21+. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

[EXPOS]

Rev It Up

Sand Sports Super Show

Summer may be over (or just about), but that doesn't mean fun in the sun and sand can't continue. We're not talking about heading out to the beach—we're talking ATVs, dirt bikes, sand rails, side-by-sides and other motorsport racing machines to thrust adrenalin junkies into the dunes for a thrilling adventure. The Sand Sports Super Show is the best expo around to shop for the aforementioned whips, as well as gear, parts, accessories, and all other manners of goods and necessities one needs to circumvent danger and accidents in the pursuit of fun. Check out the online directory and the expansive list of vendors on the event's website in your search for the off-road thrill ride of your life.

Sand Sports Super Show at the OC Fair & Events Center, 88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-1500, www.sandssportssupershow.com. 9 a.m. $16; children 10 and younger, free. —AIMEE MURILLO

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mon/09/17

[ART]

Dreams That Drip

'Sunny Kim: Cosmic Dream'

The hazy, colorful paintings of Sunny Kim remind one of melting ice cream or splattered liquid on a window, but their inherent meaning is based on the cosmos. By allowing acrylic paint to run down linen material, colors flow freely and undeterred by the hand of the artist. This allows Kim to explore the dual relationship between harmony and chaos, as the paint melds together in a disorderly fashion to create works that she likens to the nature of the universe.

"Sunny Kim: Cosmic Dream" at Sandstone Gallery, 384-A N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-6775, www.sandstonegallery.com. Noon. Through Oct. 1. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

tue/09/18

[CONCERT]

Latin Lover

Romeo Santos

We're hoping the Honda Center is big enough to hold the swaths of lovesick women clamoring to be Romeo Santos' *obsesión*. As noted in Gustavo Arellano's 2015 writeup on the Puerto Rican/Dominican loverboy, Santos' popularity extends far beyond Latin America and into the greater part of Europe; noted American hitmakers including Nicki Minaj and Drake even appear in his songs. Maybe bring along a pair of earplugs tonight to protect yourself from the shrieks of the swooning audience.

Romeo Santos at the Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 704-2500, www.hondacenter.com. 8 p.m. $49.50-$500. —AIMEE MURILLO

wed/09/19

[CONCERT]

Untethered Again

Built to Spill

Since the release of 2015's *Untethered Moon*, indie-rock veterans Built to Spill have been busy, even if their recording output hasn't shown it. Before the Boise-based band left longtime label Warner Bros. to go independent in 2017, members Brett Nelson and Jim Roth quit the outfit. But Portland Trail Blazers fan Doug Martsch and his remaining bandmates have now embarked on a short tour of mostly California locales that continue their 2018 string of playing festivals and small clubs/theaters. This could mean that a long-overdue album is finally in the works, which is no small matter to their devoted following. And Built to Spill's unpredictable live shows remain a favorite.

Built to Spill at Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com. 9 p.m. $32.50. 21+. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

[COMEDY]

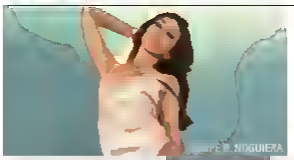
Laugh-In

Bust Ya Gut Comedy

It's said that laughter is the cure for so many ills—physical and otherwise—that it can help our moods, help us forget our problems, distract us from the world's troubles, and just add lightness to our lives. So in that spirit, tonight's Rec Room event brings forth a cavalcade of standup comics to entertain you with their humorous asides and anecdotes to supply you with the much-needed laughs you're looking for. Having previously appeared on HBO, Def Jam and Speak Live, comedians Kenny Webber, Roni Raw, Ocean Glapion, Dexter Smiles, Aaron Thompson, Comedian Al Greene, Kal Hamilton and G King, as well as some surprise drop-in guests hit the stage to provide you with some old-fashioned relief.

Bust Ya Gut Comedy at Rec Room HB, 7227 Edinger Blvd., Huntington Beach, (714) 316-0775, www.recroomhb.com. 8 p.m. $10-$15. —AIMEE MURILLO

thu/09/20



QUEEN KALI

Kali Uchis

Since performing at the Observatory this time last year, singer Kali Uchis' star has blown up, thanks to a colorfully retro video for her song "After the Storm," directed by British model Nadia Lee Cohen. Featuring guest appearances by legendary funk bassist Bootsy Collins and frequent collaborator Tyler, The Creator, the song helped to make the already-popular Uchis a household name, leading her to more prominent gigs such as *The Tonight Show With Jimmy Fallon* and Coachella in April. Faithful fans are familiar with the sultry singer's appeal, and tonight they'll be able to share another mesmerizing set from the Colombian chanteuse. Expect songs from her latest album, *Isolation*, as well as older favorites from her cotton-candy-colored hair days.

Kali Uchis with Gabriel Garzon-Montano at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com. 8 p.m. $40-$75. —AIMEE MURILLO

[FILM]

Blonde Moment

Film Night: *Bombshell*

Known as "the Blonde Bombshell" and "the Laughing Vamp," Jean Harlow became an international screen sensation in Howard Hughes' 1930 aviation adventure *Hell's Angels*. Although untrained and only 19, Harlow continued her winning streak throughout the 1930s, playing sassy, vampy dames alongside the likes of James Cagney, Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy. In 1933, Harlow achieved her highest popularity, starring in a string of MGM comedies that included *Bombshell*, directed by Victor Fleming and loosely based on the stardom of silent-film "It girl" Clara Bow. Catch this kooky classic on the big(ger) screen down in Laguna, and delight as Harlow chews her way through the scenery of this Pre-Code screwball (with Una Merkel and Louise Beavers in tow)— a mad-cap Hollywood takedown you'll not soon forget!

MORE ONLINE
OCWEEKLY.COM

Film Night: *Bombshell* at Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-8971, lagunaartmuseum.org. 7 p.m. $5-$7, reservations recommended. —SR DAVIES

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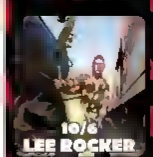

9/14	THE ATOMIC PUNKS / WAYWARD SONS
9/15	DESPERADO
9/16	PHIL VASSAR
9/20	RICHIE KOTZEN, VINNIE MOORE, GUS G
9/21	HERMAN'S HERMITS
9/22	HERMAN'S HERMITS
9/23	STRUNZ AND FARAH
9/26	TESLA / SLEDD
9/28	THE SWEET
9/29	SOULVILLE (ARETHA FRANKLIN TRIBUTE)
9/30	FUNNIEST HOUSEWIVES - AMERICA'S GOT TALENT
10/4	VONDA SHEPARD
10/5	THE ASSOCIATION
10/9	LEE ROCKER / BIG SANDY AND HIS FLY-RITE BOYS
10/7	TNE GUESS WND
10/11	AN EVENING WITH CITIZEN COPE
10/12	JD SDUTNER
10/13	TNE BABYS
10/14	PRDJECT PRESLEY (ELVIS PRESLEY TRIBUTE)
10/18	BASIA
10/20	DENNIS QUAID AND TNE SNABKS
10/21	FRANKIE VALLI TRIBUTE
10/2S	TAB BENDIT
10/28	FIVE FDR FIGNTING
10/27	BEE GEES GDLD THE TRIBUTE
10/28	COMEDY NIGNT w/ DOUG STARKS
10/31	DINGD BDINGO DANCE PARTY
11/2	DAVID BRIGNTDN'S SPACE DDDITY (DAVID BOWIE TRISUTE)
11/3	AMBRDSIA
11/7	WILLIE K
11/9	AMERICA
11/10	AMERICA
11/11	RICKIE LEE JONES
11/14	THE WIND AND THE WAVE
11/1S	TNE KINGSTDN TRIO
11/18	JONN MAYALL
11/17	AN EVENING WITH RICNIE FURAY
11/18	MICNAEL TDMLINSON
11/20	AN UNPREDICTABLE EVENING WITH TODD RUNDGREN
11/21	AN UNPREDICTABLE EVENING WITH TODD RUNDGREN
11/23	LA GUNS
11/29	BAND OF FRIENDS (A CELEBRATION OF RORY GALLAGHER)
11/30	DSB

UPCOMING SHOWS

12/1	WHICN ONE'S PINK?	12/27	DDNAVDN FRANKENREITER
12/2	DWEEZIL ZAPPA	12/29	QUEEN NATIDN
12/S	SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS	12/31	BEATLES VS STDNES
12/6	JONNY LANG	1/17	TNE MAGPIE SALUTE
12/7	JDNNY LANG	1/18	TDMMY CASTRO
12/8	LED ZEPAGAIN	1/24	JAMES NUNTER SIX
12/9	DAVE ALVIN AND JIMMIE DALE GILMDRE	1/27	ANNA NALICK
12/14	GARY No No NOEY	2/10	TNE SMITNEREENS WITH GUEST VOCALIST MARSHALL CRENSHAW
12/1S	RDBERT CRAY	2/14	DTTMAR LIEBERT & LUNA NEGRA
12/23	AN EVENING WITH DAVID BENOIT: CNARLIE BRDWN CNRISTMAS	2/24	THE FOUR FRESHMEN
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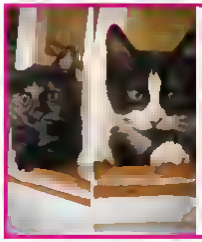
Upcoming Events

The Color Run 5k Huntington Beach
Saturday, September 29
at 9 AM - 12 PM
It's a bird! It's a plane! No— it's The Color Run flying your way in 2018!

Cruisin' For A Cure
Saturday, September 22 at 6 AM — 4 PM
Cruisin' for a Cure is the world's largest one-day charity car show with over 3,500 vehicles on display and over 200 vendors and exhibitors. Be assured that your participation in the event and any donations go directly to prostate cancer research.
General admission is $15 (Save $2 with your AAA card), children 12 & younger are free

Messages



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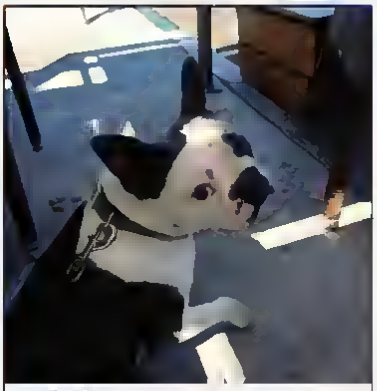
Featured This Week



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Slice of Haven

Chef Ryan Adams' Parallel Pizzeria does New Haven-style pizza in Dana Point

BY EDWIN GOEI

Parallel Pizzeria's pies are different from any other I've had in Orange County, and that's a good thing. First, there's the shape. They're more oval than round. Second, they're not sliced into triangular wedges. Instead, the cuts are made in, yes, parallel lines so that the pieces are rectangular, like at Little Caesar's.

Parallel's pizzas are also the first I've encountered for which mashed potatoes count as a topping. Most important, the dough is unlike the airy, barely there style of the Neapolitan pies we've seen a lot of lately. Rather than a hulhous, cracker-like edge crust that turns floppy toward the middle, these pies possess a uniform thickness from edge to edge that maintains its structural integrity while still being thin.

Each piece is completely rigid, a stable platform that no amount of toppings can bend, dampen or droop. That has a lot to do with the dough's density, but also with how well the bottom is baked. The undercarriage has a good amount of char, attained after spending seven minutes on the searing-hot floor of a 700-degree, coal-fueled oven. As I bit into it, I heard the crackles of a million tiny molecular bonds breaking.

Above all, this pizza is crispy and crunchy. It's as if the dough were pan-fried in olive oil. On my fingers, I felt the slick of its grease—not as much oil as that of a pan pizza, but there are some inherent similarities to it, including the hearty and satisfying chew of its crust.

What Ryan Adams—the chef behind Three Seventy Common and Buttermilk Fried Chicken—was shooting for is a New Haven-style pie. I've not yet been to New Haven, but if Adams says that these are what they taste like there, I believe him. I read he pulled out all the stops to make it as accurate as possible to what that city's Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana pioneered. Adams was reported to have sought the help of UC Irvine experts to mimic Connecticut water for his dough, even adding drops of blue green algae.

But perhaps the most faithful thing he did was to top one with clams. It can be argued that the clam pie put Frank Pepe's on the pizza map. And while Adams' version is a nod to the original, it's not a straight-up copy. Adams pairs the littlenecks with garlic and pecorino, then adds bacon—lots of bacon. The resulting flavor profile is smoky, but also briny. It reminds me of the last time I had a bowl of clams steamed in white wine, butter and garlic, with a side of grilled bread to sop up the broth. This pizza emulates that entire experience, down to the part in which errant grains of sand from a clam interrupts the pleasure.

EDWIN GOEI

This brings me to the mashed-potato pizza, which I actually like better than the clam pie. I am at a loss to explain why the splotches of potatoes actually work here, maybe it's because the pizza is also packed with rings of jalapeño, pecorino, onion, garlic, thyme, black pepper, olive oil and more bacon. Perhaps the bland mashed potato acts as a sort of reprieve. Whatever bizarre alchemy is at play, I'm now of the firm belief that the traditional side dish makes more sense on a pizza than canned pineapple.

If you want fruit in any part of your dinner here, let it be in a salad—particularly the house salad, which is studded with juicy pears, candied walnuts and morsels of runny gorgonzola. Since it uses fancy mixed greens and is dressed with a tart lemon vinaigrette of Adams' own making, the dish tastes like a gourmet restaurant salad. It just happens to be served in a wooden bowl with tongs, as though you were in a neighborhood pizza parlor that still has a Pac Man machine in the back.

That's how Parallel rolls. There are flashes of Adams' more upscale Laguna Beach restaurant here, especially in his well-trained service staff. But at its core, Parallel just wants to be a laid-back pizza joint that has a TV tuned to sports, Coke from a self-serve fountain, and a very good, no-nonsense basket of Buffalo wings.

The wings, by the way, came with a warning. "Be careful," our server said. "They just came out of the fryer, and they're super-hot!"

It was exactly what I wanted to hear when I order Buffalo wings, be it in Buffalo, Dana Point or New Haven.

PARALLEL PIZZERIA
34255 Pacific Coast Hwy., Ste 101, Dana Point, (949) 441-7406, parallelpizzeria.com. Open Sun.-Thurs., 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri.-Sat., 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Pizzas, $10.95-$29.95

WHAT THE ALE
» GREG NAGEL

TJ's Best

A hoppy IPA sitting on a warm shelf is not the way any brewer intended to have his or her beer be sold. But at Trader Joe's, there they are, testing the limits of shelf stability, one day at a time, gently melting away hop aromatics and flavor while paving the way for the inevitable implosion into a tidy pile of malt dust.

Just as any grocery store, there are some educated decisions you should make before putting something in your cart: Can or bottle? House brand vs. local? And most important, what is the cost?

After an insane weekend filled with blind tastings, here are the best beers to grab at your closest TJ's:

Best Value: The German-made Bitburger Pilsner is middle of the-road on flavor, but it's damn crushable. Bitburger has a super-classic, floral, noble hop character and crisp-cracker-like malt backbone. The Simpler Times and Trader José beers weren't up to snuff, and Josephsbrau beers were just okay. Bit's price and format (four-pack of 16-ounce cans, $4.99) easily wins.

Best IPA. This relies on a few factors, but generally you should go for Pizza Port, Sierra Nevada or Firestone Walker thanks to their superb packaging regimens. Check for the freshest date code and go from there. On a recent visit, pint cans of Port Brewing Mongo DIPA were $12.99 per six-pack, and the West Coast IPA still had the three Ds—dope, dank and delicious.

Best Classy Beer: The Chimay Blue Grand Reserve is corked, caged and, most important, able to stand the test of time thanks to superb bottle conditioning and a high ABV of 9 percent. Belgium's dark Trappist ale sells for $12.99.

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To find a Trader Joe's near you, visit www.traderjoes.com

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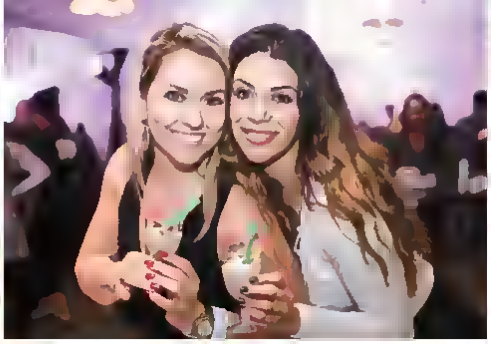

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SARAH BENNETT

A New Hope

La Esperanza opens just in time for Guatemala's Independence Day

LONG BEACH LUNCH
» SARAH BENNETT

It might not be vogue to say this in Southern California, but Guatemalan tamales are superior to Mexican ones. Apologies to all the dense, hand-molded Mexican masa mounds out there, but when it comes to texture and fillings and flavor, *los chapines* win.

Though harder to find (and even harder to find done right), the Central American country's take on the Mesoamerican tradition of steamed corn and meat is well worth the hunt. Thin masa and hunks of pork or chicken are wrapped inside a banana leaf and heated until it fluffs up like a jiggly soufflé. Unfold the leaf of the tamal guatemalteco, and each brick oozes at the cracks with a tomato sauce called recado, a seed-infused, romesco-like sauce that's part marinade, part mild salsa. If you're lucky, there are olives, raisins and maybe some capers, too.

Guatemalans also have chuchitos (smaller than the guatemalteco, with harder masa and a corn-husk wrapper), tamalitos de chipilín (baby-fist-sized chuchitos flecked with the delicate leaves of the chipilín plant) and paches (made from mushed potatoes instead of corn).

And now you don't have to travel to Torrance for these Guatemalan treats, as La Esperanza Restaurant and Bakery opens its second location in Long Beach, coincidentally celebrating its official grand opening on Saturday, Guatemala's *día de la independencia*.

As with food from the neighboring Yucatán, Guatemalan cuisine is heavy on the Mayan influence. This means poultry more than beef, stews made with seeds, and an emphasis on native corn and legumes, exemplified in dishes such as pepián, a dark gravy made not from meat juices, but rather pumpkin seeds that drapes over a serving of braised chicken thighs like a heavy coat of paint.

La Esperanza also serves a cadre of El Salvadoran dishes, most pulled straight from the diets of that country's indigenous Pipil. With the inevitable fusion of Arab and Hispanic ingredients brought by the Spanish conquistadors to all of Latin America, it could be said that La Esperanza serves its own form of fusion food.

La Esperanza is a clean, brightly decorated, welcoming place to get acquainted with the character of Guatemala's specialties. Servers are more than happy to help newcomers navigate the extensive menu, offering stories about the restaurant's history (it started as a bakery, then grew into a full kitchen [illegible]), explaining the meaning behind some of the dishes' names ("*shuco*" means "dirty," which fits the sloppy hot-dog-and-chorizo sandwich) and suggesting people try items that might be unfamiliar to them (the ensalada is not a green salad, but rather an agua fresca of mixed fruit overflowing with apple pulp and whole nances).

Whether you order a made-on-demand pupusa, a plate of pepián or a hearty tamal guatemalteco, every check gets dropped off with a spoonful of chile candy wrapped in a little piece of plastic. It's a creative take on a Guatemalan lollipop, and it's better than any of the American ones.

LA ESPERANZA
1626 Orange Ave., Long Beach, laesperanzarestaurants.com

GREG NAGEL

Herding Cocktails

Near Stout and churros at Vaca

I think there are enough ways to tickle your brain cells and taste buds with jitters-inducing, delicious coffee? Think again. Aside from award-winning local roasters, there are craft beer-coffee hybrids such as Noble Ale Works' decadent Naughty Sauce, Beachwood's Pablo Escobeer and Chapman Crafted's Slow Riser. But caffeinated-beer-inspired cocktails that contain no beer? What kind of madness is this?

Sitting at the far end of Vaca's bar during intermezzo, one's back to various tomahawk steaks and house-cured sausage, the must-get Vaca Tonic ($13) is knocked back at a rate that causes immediate brain freeze. David Saenz, one of the Costa Mesa restaurant's talented bartenders, introduces me to his newest concoction, the Near Stout ($14).

"You have to try this drink I've been working on that is sort of reminiscent of a coffee stout," he says, his words like catnip to a booze writer.

I exhale fast to try to kill my frost-bit head.

"It's more of a daytime crusher than a sweet, desserty drink," he continues as he pulls a bit of fresh coffee for the cocktail shaker. "Along with El Tesoro Reposado Tequila and Campari, it uses a bit of turbinado sugar to add a little bit of body back into it." Also in the mix is St. George NOLA coffee liqueur, which uses Ethiopian Arabica coffee beans, French-roasted chicory root, Madagascar vanilla and other complex sugars.

Near Stout is served in a stemmed beer glass, blushing a deep-ruby hue. The pillowy-white head, as it were, is the biggest surprise, as it uses no egg white and doesn't really dissipate. Resting nicely on top are three coffee beans, a nod to the con la mosca Sambuca serving, each bean representing health, happiness and prosperity.

On paper, the drink makes no sense. When I think of coffee-friendly spirits, tequila is probably near the bottom of the list, but in Near Stout, it adds a balance to the cacophony of fruity flavors. The whole thing has a pleasant Samuel Smith's Taddy Porter vibe, in which British ales often have stonefruit notes and minerality that can balance out the roast.

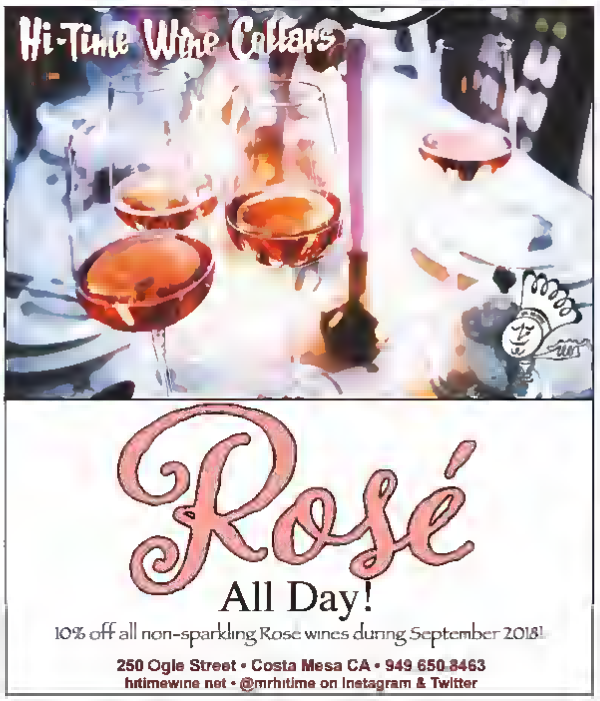
During intermezzo, Vaca's menu is basically bar snacks, prepped desserts and cheese. I went full dessert mode with a set of warm churros ($8) that come with a thick, goosebump-worthy sauce. I highly recommend dipping once in the gooey chocolate, once in the cocktail, back in the chocolate, bite, then sip, leaving a healthy, happy, prosperous froth-stache. Sure you might look weird, but it's the next best thing to coffee and doughnuts in the afternoon.

Eat & Drink This Now

» GREG NAGEL

VACA

695 Town Center Dr., Ste. 170, Costa Mesa, (714) 463-6060, www.vacarestaurant.com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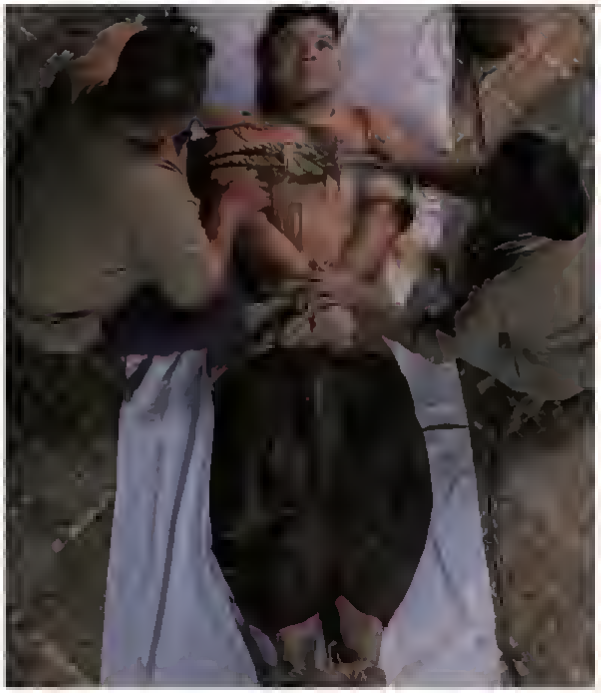

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: *THE WITCH*, *MIND CAGE* AND *ANGKAR*

COURTESY OF CAMBODIA TOWN FILM FESTIVAL

Six Years and Counting!

Cambodia Town Film Festival returns with another year of amazing programming

BY AIMEE MURILLO

Over the past six years, the Cambodia Town Film Festival has established itself as a celebration of Khmer culture by sharing a wide scope of films either made in Cambodia, focused on Cambodian issues or made by Cambodian filmmakers. Set in Long Beach, the hub for the Cambodian community, this year's cinematic span offers indie, documentary, short, student-made and narrative flicks from around the world that are informative, intriguing and just plain entertaining. Here's my list of what wonderful programming to see at the Art Theatre from Thursday, Sept. 13 until the fest closes on Sunday.

LETTERS FROM HOME

This isn't officially a film, but a theatrical production by Kalean Ung, who will perform *Letters From Home* live. Written by the half-Cambodian, half-Sicilian Ung and directed by Marina McClure, it explores Ung's connection to her family's past and their escape from the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s, as well as navigating the world as a biracial woman.

ANGKAR

Powerful and impactful, Neary Adeline Hay's documentary *Angkar* follows her father, Khonsaly, as they travel together to his old Cambodian village, where he recounts his memories and encounters his old Khmer Rouge persecutors. As heavy and dark as the subject matter seems, Hay's fly-on-the-wall camerawork focuses on her father from a respectful distance, ultimately presenting him as a survivor of a horrific past. Khonsaly's stories, as well as those told by fellow prisoners from the same detention center, give first-person accounts that fill in important details of the rural population's experience during the regime of the Khmer Rouge.

MIND CAGE

Amit Dubey's thriller explores the conflicts between traditional superstition and scientific medicine. A psychologist tries to treat rural, mentally ill patients, but he must first confront a spiritual healer who uses brutal, unconventional methods and locks people up in cages. This is apparently the first psychological thriller from Cambodia, partly inspired by the real-life plight of the nation's mentally ill citizens, and features excellent performances and chilling cinematography by Jimmy Henderson.

THE JOY LUCK CLUB

Now, I know what you're thinking: A movie about Chinese people in a Cambodian film festival? Considering the film is one of the few American films to feature a predominantly Asian cast and includes themes relatable to other Asian cultures (and beyond), it's a solid choice to include this free screening in honor of the film's 25th anniversary. Based on Amy Tan's novel, the stories of four aging women who play mahjong together are interwoven as vignettes, as are the stories of their American-born daughters.

THE WITCH

Making its U.S. premiere at the Cambodia Town Film Festival, this spooky film will probably unsettle you enough to make you sleep with the lights on. Horror movies based in folk tales and fairy tales are some of the best, and this one hinges on an old Khmer story about a witch who can make people sick or kill them. Set in the Longvek period, a young tycoon named Raj suspects black magic is drying up his family well, making his workers disappear and injuring him before eventually disappearing altogether. It's like *The Exorcist* mixed with *The VVitch* and *Poltergeist*. Despite the CGI graphics looking a little hokey, *The Witch* still makes for an effectively creepy movie.

SHORT FILM SECTION

The fest opens with a block of shorts ranging from a neon-tinged music video for synth-wave group Indradevi's "Idols" to a health campaign video titled "Wash It" to the mysterious *The Morning After*, about a young Australian backpacker who awakens in a Cambodian rice field with no recollection of how he got there, but who must search for his missing girlfriend.

AMURILLO@OCWEEKLY.COM

CAMBODIA TOWN FILM FESTIVAL
at the Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach. cambodiatownfilmfestival.com. Thurs.-Sun., Sept. 13-16. See website for screening times and ticket prices.

You've Got to Have Faith

BY MATT COKER

Madeline's Madeline A theater director's latest project takes on a life of its own when her young star takes her performance too seriously. *The Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Sept. 13, 12:30, 5:30 & 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich. Tommy Wiklund's 2018 horror flick has re-animated puppets embarking on a bloody killing spree. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Sept. 13, 3 & 10:45 p.m. $7-$10.*

Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood. Matt Tymauer's documentary is based on the best-selling memoir of Scotty Bowers. Bowers and Tymauer participate in an audience Q&A at the first Friday screening. *Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435. Thurs., Sept. 13, 5 p.m., Fri., 6 (with Q&A) & 8:15 p.m., Mon.-Wed., 8:15 & 8:30 p.m., Thurs., Sept. 20, 4 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Moses. Live animals, massive sets and spectacular special effects are promised. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., Sept. 13 & 20, 6:30 p.m.; Sat., 12:55 p.m. $12.50.*

Alleged Gangster. A mobster comes out of prison after three years to claw his way to the top of LA's underworld. *Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Thurs., Sept. 13, 7:30 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Mandy. A broken and haunted man hunts in the Pacific Northwest wilderness for an unhinged religious sect that slaughtered the love of his life. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Sept. 13, 8 p.m. Sans Q&A Fri. & Sun.-Thurs., Sept. 20, 1:30, 4:30 & 8 p.m., Sat., 1:30, 4:30 & 11 p.m. $7-$10.*

Perfect Blue. A singer quits her band to become an actress and shed her good-girl image. However, her fans aren't ready to see her go. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Sept. 13, 9:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

1945. Two strangers arrive at the railway station outside a Hungarian village on a day that was supposed to end with a joyous wedding celebration, but instead is capped by tragedy. *Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Fri., 3:30 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Jaws. A police chief, an ichthyologist and a grizzled sea captain hunt a great white shark that's been snacking on a small coastal town's tourists. *Salt Creek Beach, 33333 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Dana Point, (949) 923-2280; ocparks.com. Fri., 6 p.m. Free.*

Dirty Dancing. The 1987 rom-dram popularized the saying "Nobody puts Baby in a corner." *Eisenhower Park, Main Street and Ocean Avenue, Seal Beach; moviesintheparksb.com. Fri., 7 p.m. Free.*

Shin Godzilla. Japan is plunged into chaos after a skyscraper-sized lizard rises from the sea and lays waste to Tokyo. *The Source OC, first-floor Step Plaza, 6940 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, (714) 521-8858; www.thesourceoc.com. Fri., 7 p.m. Free.*

Iron Giant. A boy befriends a robot from outer space as the army hunts down the iron giant. *Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort & Marina, behind Moe B's Watersports, 1131 Back Bay Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 729-3863. Fri., 7:30 p.m. Free, but there is a fee to park.*

Crown and Anchor. The lives of a straight-edge young man and his user cousin intersect with violent and tragic consequences. *Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Fri., 10:30 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

***The Lord of the Rings* Trilogy: Extended Edition Marathon.** Because the marathon sold out in August, Frida's bringing it back. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., 11:30 a.m. $15 for all three films.*

Dragon Ball Z: Broly. Powerful Saiyan warrior Broly has Goku, Vegeta and friends squarely in his sights as they battle for the future of the universe. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Sat., 12:55 p.m., Mon., 7 p.m. $12.50.*

Celebration of Iranian Cinema at UCI. The Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with UC Irvine's Jordan Center for Persian Studies and the UCLA Film & Television Archives, present the third annual celebration of films made in Iran. *UCI, Crystal Cove Auditorium, 4113 Pereira Dr., Irvine, (310) 666-1546. Sat.-Sun., 4 & 9 p.m. $12 per film; $75 for all four, plus a VIP reception.*

Canelo vs. GGG2. Canelo Alvarez and Gennady Golovkin engage in a rematch that is broadcast live from Las Vegas and beamed into theaters nationwide. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Sat., 5 p.m. $20.*

The Goonies. A group of misfits seek pirate treasure to save their home. *Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort & Marina, (949) 729-3863. Sat., 7:30 p.m. Free, but there is a fee to park.*

Despicable Me 3. The Minions want back their old crime boss, but Gru considers himself retired. *Hurless Barton Park, 4601 Casa Loma Ave., Yorba Linda, (714) 961-7192. Sat., 8 p.m. Free.*

Anime Club. Animes are streamed, plus premium prizes from Crunchyroll are doled out during this program aimed at ages 13-17. *Cypress Library, 5331 Orange Ave., Cypress, (714) 826-0350. Sun., 10:30 a.m. Free.*

Jurassic Park. Things go screwy on an island where cloned dinosaurs roam free in a wildlife park. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Sun., 2 & 7 p.m., Tues.-Wed., 7 p.m. $12.50.*

Me Facing Life: Cyntoia's Story. Cyntoia Brown, a sex-trafficking victim, was sentenced to life in prison at the age of 16 for killing a john. *Port Theater, 2905 E. Coast Hwy., Corona del Mar, (714) 619-8419; ocwomenshealth.org. Sun., 4 p.m. $100-$1,000.*

Zero Weeks. Ky Dickens' 2017 documentary about "America's sick-leave crisis." *Irvine United Congregational Church, 4915 Alton Pkwy., Irvine; iucc.org. Tues., 6:30 p.m. Free.*

Sunset Blvd. Chapman University's Los Angeles in Film and Fiction class kicks off with Billy Wilder's 1950 skewering of Tinsel Town. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Tues., 7 p.m. $7-$10.*

The Dawn Wall. It's an action-sports documentary on American rock climbers Tommy Caldwell and Kevin Jorgeson scaling the Dawn Wall (Yosemite's 3,000-foot face) in 2015. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Wed., 7 p.m. $12.50.*

Kiki's Delivery Service. This beloved coming-of-age story follows a resourceful young witch who uses her broom to create a delivery service, only to lose her gift of flight in a moment of self-doubt. *Regency South Coast Village, 1561 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $8.*

The Searchers. John Wayne plays Ethan Edwards, a menacing Civil War veteran who is either trying to rescue or hunt down his niece, who was taken by Comanches who wiped out her family. *Regency San Juan Capistrano, 26762 Verdugo St., San Juan Capistrano, (949) 661-3456. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $14.*

Rudy. The grueling quest of "5-feet-nothin' a hundred and nothin' pound" Rudy Ruettiger to make the Notre Dame Fighting Irish football team. *Fullerton Public Library, Osborne Auditorium, 353 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., Sept. 20, 1 p.m. Free.*

Priced Out: Gentrification in Portland, Oregon. A personal and investigative look at housing discrimination and the pain of losing one's community as new money moves into ethnic communities and old residents find themselves priced out. *Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Thurs., Sept. 20, 6:30 p.m. Free.*

An American in Paris. The Musical. The Tony Award-winning musical, inspired by the Oscar-winning MGM film, tells the fiery story of true love found in the City of Lights. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, 25471 Rancho Niguel Rd., Laguna Niguel, (949) 831-0446; also at Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701. Thurs., Sept. 20, 7 p.m. $13-$17.*

The Penalty. Will Francome and Mark Pizzey's documentary reveals an America in which grieving families, botched executions and wrongful convictions challenge what we think we know about the ultimate punishment. *Cal State Fullerton, Humanities 110, 800 N. State College Blvd., Fullerton, (657) 278-2011. Thurs., Sept. 20, 7 p.m. Free.*

Digimon Adventure tri.: Future. The climactic finale has the suffering DigiDestined standing together to save their friends and the Real World, which may be swept up by the Digital World. Dubbed in English from the anime's original Japanese. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., Sept. 20, 7:30 p.m. $12.50.*

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

Not for the Birds

Art takes flight at new Orange Coast College exhibit

BY DAVE BARTON

It's Elizabeth Turk's first day at her open studio at Orange Coast College's Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion. One wall is covered with dozens of silhouettes of extinct birds, there's a video of her at work setting up sketches and preparatory drawings, and then at play, rolling around the gallery in a desk chair; there are fabricated glass birds in a grid, metal versions of the same design and several bird cages. Investigate, and you'll discover a couple of nests, petite eggs inside, a camera recording the goings-on, as well as a live webcam aimed at a bald eagle in Catalina. This intellectual and visual feast is only the beginning of Turk's generous allowance into her creative process, "ThinkLab LIVE .002: Extinct Bird Cages," with things ramping up a couple of times a week over the next month. Consider this less a review than an excited rumination on what now exists—and what's coming down the path.

While some of this may sound familiar to those who saw the artist's "Sentient Forms" at Laguna Art Museum four years ago, it isn't a duplicate effort. At Laguna, one room was devoted to books, pictures and other items that inspired her work with marble, all items behind glass, separating us from her work and keeping us at arm's length. This time around, however, everything is out in the open, less museum exhibit than a curio-shop version of Turk's mind. Accenting the "Change=Life=Extinction" and "Extinction=Change=Life" signs hanging on one wall, this show's ecological concerns are clearly part of the project, but it is also solidly about things missing, honoring the holes left in nature's tapestry. Its repetitious imagery works like mini sledgehammers, breaking down our defenses, its variety moves us from one consideration of loss to the next.

Many of the individual birds in the silhouettes are unidentifiable to anyone but an ornithologist, while the artist has made neat handwritten notations on others, detailing their habitats, food, the year of their disappearance, etc. They're black profiles against a white background, the negative space freezing them in place and time as if a block of ice, the small color-palette grids painted next to them, reminders of a rainbow of feathers that have been wiped away. On another wall, the same outlines have been superimposed over pictures of clouded skies, the bird's blue-tinted ghosts now distinct holes in the space where they should be. In other printouts, tinted sepia, the shadows are superimposed atop each other to a degree that the resulting jumble resembles a pile of lifeless bodies, choked by the thick pollution surrounding them. The disarray makes them indistinguishable from each other; in others, it blots out the sky. Another series is of white shadows, in several layers against a blue background. The birds look as if they're tumbling out of the heavens, a thick snowstorm of corpses.

WINGED INSPIRATION

COURTESY OF FRANK M. DOYLE ARTS PAVILION

There are designs of birds on high wires placed at different levels so they resemble notations on a musical score. I have no idea if the figures represent actual notes, but the tease that they might is almost intriguing enough to counterbalance the darker idea that if it is a song, we'll never hear it.

Turk's black metal birdcages on stilts, the roofs pointed like rockets (or bullets), are fabricated on each side with a design. Unclear until you bend down and look closely, it's a posse of hunters all holding rifles. While most cages offer serene, even bland, surroundings, as if to suggest that the clipped-wing pets inside couldn't possibly be unhappy in their little jails, Turk's have entirely the opposite effect. Human figures, in silhouette like the birds on the gallery walls, are duplicated in row after row, an army facing the animal trapped inside.

The remaining pieces (so far) include watercolor designs for wind chimes, with historical and interpretive notes, a kind of memento mori glass bird design reflecting the individual looking at them, and metal wheels and half-circles decorated with birds on wires. And instead of origami paper to make birds, Turk has paper with the birds already on it.

This is all the start of an outdoor installation Turk is designing, a large presentation that will eventually make its way to Catalina Island Museum. A planned giant bird cage large enough to allow humans inside, it should be an impressively oppressive reminder that when ecologically sensitive birds start dropping, then it's only a short time before human beings also hit the skids. It also proposes that we're the ones who should be in cages, if for no other reason than to prevent the inevitable.

"THINKLAB LIVE .002: EXTINCT BIRD CAGES"
at Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion, Orange Coast College, 2701 Fairview Rd., Costa Mesa (714) 432-5738, orangecoastcollege.edu/DoyleArts. Open Mon.–Wed., 11 a.m.–8 p.m.; Thurs., 11 a.m.–7 p.m.; Sat., noon–4 p.m. Through Oct. 4. Free.

ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

Sept. 14-20

A NIGHT WITH JANIS JOPLIN: A musical interpretation of the Southern rock & roll blues singer, starring Mary Bridget Davies. Wed.–Thurs., 7:30 p.m.; Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat., 2 & 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. Through Oct. 7. $20–$84. La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts, 14900 La Mirada Blvd., La Mirada, (562) 944-9801, lamiradatheatre.com.

"BATTLE FOR THE ISLAND OF THE GARGANTUAS—A TIKI ART RUMBLE": World-renowned lowbrow artists from the Gargantuas Art Collective compete in an art show, for which they create works around eight pre-determined themes. Guests vote for the winner. Sat., 7–10 p.m. Free. Made By Millworks, 240 Pine Ave., Long Beach. (562) 564-6233; madebymillworks.com.

HAUNTED BY HISTORY: *Bizarre Los Angeles* writer Craig Owens gives an informative talk on some of the most unknown haunted spots around Southern California. Mon., 5 p.m. Free. Costa Mesa Donald Dungan Library, 1855 Park Ave., Costa Mesa. (949) 646-8845, ocpl.org/libinc/cmdd.

HOLLYWOOD LATINOS OFFSPRING: Mónika Rivera brings a presentation and book signing of her teens, which focuses on the contributions of Latinos to the big screen. Sat., 2 p.m. $10; members free. Museum of Latin American Art, 628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach. (562) 437-1689, molaa.org.

I DIG ROCK AND ROLL MUSIC: Theatrical concert experience that celebrates America's folk-rock roots from the 1960s through the '80s. Wed., Sat., 7:30 p.m.; Sat., 2 p.m.; Sun., 1 p.m. Through Sept. 23. $45–$60. Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-2787, www.lagunaplayhouse.com.

THE SUNSHINE BOYS: Neil Simon's play deals with a couple of aged vaudeville stars not speaking to each other because of a long-held grudge. A career retrospective reunites them and rekindles their friendship. Thurs.–Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. Through Sept. 30. $20–$27. Camino Real Playhouse, 31776 El Camino Real, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 489-8082, caminorealplayhouse.org.

"THRESHOLDS": Photographer Kristine Koch fiddle shares vivid ocean scenes from her travels around the world. Open Tues., Thurs., 11 a.m.–4 p.m.; Fri.–Sun., 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Through Oct. 10. $5; members and children younger than 12, free. Casa Romántica, 415 Avenida Granada, San Clemente. (949) 498-2139; www.casaromantica.org.

"THROUGH THE LENS": A group show from established photographers using film, iPhone, polaroid, digital and other styles. Open Sun.–Wed., 10:30 a.m.–6 p.m., Thurs.–Sat., 11 a.m.–8 p.m. Through Sept. 30. Free. Las Laguna Gallery, 577 S. Coast Hwy., Ste. A-1, Laguna Beach, (949) 667-1803; www.laslagunagallery.com.

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Roll With Soul

Legendary DJ Big Bert leads roller-skating culture forward

BY NICK NUK'EM

A handful of nerdy high schoolers lurch off the floor at the Fountain Valley Skating Center It's a Thursday night, and for the entire day, the planet has been dealing with the passing of their Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin.

Silence falls over the dated building tucked away in a parking lot, and for a second, one can start to reflect on just what Franklin's existence meant to both music and an entire population of marginalized people who cling to entertainment for figurative and literal escapes from their situations.

Opposite the teens in the rink is a growing swath of mostly older black people lacing up to let loose on the rink, just as they do every Thursday night. Some slide their feet into the worn beige rentals, but most others don custom skates by Stacy Adams or Jordans, as well as more traditional looks with their initials or representing their hometown.

Marilyn "Socks" Coleman is wearing a 50-year-old pair She earned her nickname when she started skating more than 50 years ago, as she distinguished herself from other skaters by lacing up over sometimes eight pairs of socks at a time

The 67-year-old Detroit native points out the top skater from their pirouetting prime. Rockin' Richard Houston's skills took him from the D to LA, where he took first place on *The Gong Show* during its first run in the 1970s Rockin' Richard is back in the Southland, auditioning for a judge spot on the new *Gong Show* and promoting his upcoming autobiography, which details his time as the best on the floor

Detroit's presence in the building couldn't have felt any stronger on this night, which is kicked off by Franklin's 1976 Curtis Mayfield-penned track "Sparkle." Skaters mosey onto the floor, and across the way, in the back corner, posts DJ Big Bert, the man responsible for delivering this unicorn of an event to skaters weekly for the past four years

Big Bert is nothing short of a Southern California legend. Prior to lugging his talents past the Orange Curtain, the 55-year-old ran LA's World on Wheels for about 18 years, curating velvety-smooth vibes that keep skaters on the floor and using the rink as a resource, whether to raise money for kids to visit the White House or to offer jobs to previously incarcerated men.

In 2013, though, Bert and rollers from Mid-City, South Central and surrounding areas lost the centerpiece of their community when World on Wheels shuttered. The displaced skaters moved on to floors in cities such as Glendale, Northridge, Chino and Cerritos.

DJ BIG BERT BRINGS THE FUNK

NICK NUK'EM

But Bert turned down chances to assume a similar role at these rinks, instead booking the occasional private gig across the country and deejaying at non-skating events. He even rejected the first offer he got to take over a night at Fountain Valley until a trusted, longtime friend and skater recommended he consider the opportunity as a way to help patch some of the skating-rink-sized hole caused by World on Wheels' closure He reluctantly accepted, and it ended up working out.

Before he would take the job, Bert made sure the Fountain Valley Skating Center met the specs he felt were needed to create a successful experience for the community he'd served for so long The floor would have to be redone, shedding its blue finish for the traditional parquet surface, and the sound system required a tune-up before he'd play choice tracks that range from Freddie Jackson's "Jam Tonight" to 03 Greedo's "Rude."

"[Fountain Valley Skating Center's] business owners are the best business owners that I've ever met in my life," says Bert. "When you come to the rink, the manager greets you, the skate attendant greets you, They make you feel like you're coming home and you're family."

It's rare you'll find Bert attributing such accolades to himself, though. In the '80s, the New Orleans native co-founded the LA Dream Team, one of the first West Coast hip-hop acts to gain traction. Bert is in many ways the through line in the fragmented sections of Southern California's Black Experience, which he cultivates through decisions such as hiring LA's Trap Kitchen to cater the night instead of the usual skating-rink concessions. He has received plaques from the city for his role in community improvement and has hosted weekend-long, family-friendly events such as the West Coast Back to Cali Jam. "I think if you were to ask most Los Angeles skaters who their favorite DJ is, they would say 'Big Bert,'" Coleman says "He tries to cater to all skaters. He always shows love to visitors and acknowledges me and my Detroit skate family by playing the music we like to roll to when he sees us."

Thursday nights are for all ages Tee, a 21-year-old rink employee from Paramount, shares that his cousins, sister, mom, dad and stepmom are all in attendance His newfound hobby has led him to travel to Vegas, and he's looking forward to an upcoming Atlanta trip "I know I wanted to skate," he says. "I didn't think it was gonna be like this. It's like my happy place."

A small group of twentysomethings spend the night mostly in one another's company, laughing and fraternizing, only skating a bit throughout the evening. They don't know a life without rolling, they say, referring to their group as "skate fam."

"Young people like to skate with the elders to learn rhythm," says Big Bert, a tribal leader of sorts in this realm.

As Burt plays Nellie Tiger Travis' "Mr Sexy Man," a middle-aged man pulls up to the DJ booth to exclaim, "You on yo' shit tonight!"

It's one of several pop-ins made by the attendees who look at Bert with wonder Bert checks in on each one· "How was your birthday?" "When you leaving town again?" "How was your trip?"

This lifestyle is an adhesive, binding otherwise individual experiences, and Big Bert is the bridge that connects children to parents, blacks to whites, and the future to the past. He's creating a utopia that thrives on trust, respect and, of course, music—it's the only way he knows how to roll.

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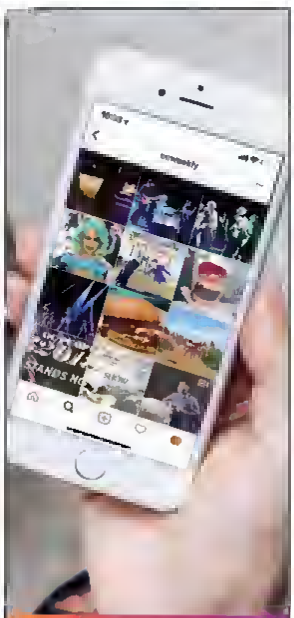

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COURTESY OF JOHN KRAUS AND THE GOERS

Ship-rocked

John Kraus and the Goers' sea shanties are nautical by nature

BY JOSH CHESLER

For all the rockers, rappers and artists in between who swear they live the lifestyle represented in their music, few can make that claim as accurately as John Kraus.

"I work on an educational vessel, so I've capitalized on working in the maritime industry," Kraus says. "I've been working on boats for about 20 years, so I've learned a lot of these songs just from the culture that comes onto the boats. The music scene is very different than the maritime industry, but I'm a musician who's played in rock bands all my life. I wanted to blend the two together."

By combining his two musical loves, Kraus aims to make sea shanties a little more listenable and fun for the landlubbers around the world. The harsh ocean tunes generally aren't something casual listeners would find on their Spotify, but Kraus and his Long Beach-based crew, the Goers, have found them to be their calling. Not only is it a way for the seaman and his merry band of misfits to play music they're passionate about, but it has also brought them success in their very specific corner of the local music scene.

"Everybody needs a niche, right?" Kraus says. "In order to stand out from the crowd, you can either manufacture something that's fake, or you can play what you know. I know these songs—and a lot of them have a rich history—so I'm interested in making them cool and fun to play. We also don't play typical rock instruments. There's a tuba and a fiddle, and those guys come from jazz and bluegrass influences. I don't think it's something you hear too often."

Although it may seem like a random assortment of instruments, the Goers actually came together more naturally than any of Kraus' other groups. Drummer Dave Dutton has been Kraus' friend and bandmate since grade school, while tuba player (and legendary *Weekly* illustrator) Bob Aul is the front man's brother-in-law. The singer and multi-instrumentalist knows fiddler Tim Weed from his bluegrass rock band, Rose's Pawn Shop. Add in a host of other musicians, and the diverse sea shanty pushers have the perfect vehicle for both covers of classics and original tunes.

On their latest record, *Live on Land*, the full crew recorded tracks together for the first time. "We recorded it about a year ago live in Claremont," Kraus says. "There's a music venue there that's also a studio, so we were able to get a good recording of the live show we played there at the same time. Not everything we played made the record, but we spliced up about eight songs to put on the live record."

As opposed to Kraus' two previous sea shanty efforts—both of which started as solo projects that were later brought to the band—this album brought the quintet's full sound and energy to maritime tracks new and old. Before checking out *Live on Land*, though, Kraus recommends new listeners dig into the previous discography—including 2012's *Derelict*—and maybe even learn some of the music's background and history.

But for the full force of Kraus' sea shanties in person, join the band at their onshore record-release party at Wreckless on Saturday.

JOHN KRAUS AND THE GOERS perform at Wreckless, 136 W. Commonwealth, Fullerton, (714) 519-3179; www.reckless.us. Sat., 8 p.m. Free. All ages.

COURTESY OF 3006 ENTERTAINMENT

Friday

BEACH RUMS, THE SIDE EYES, 3LH, HEXED; ULLY- 8 p.m., $36 all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd. Santa Ana (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

FAILING UP; STAY WILD; THE DOWNSIDES, SWEATPANTS, FOCKSTAILS-8 p.m., $15 all ages. The Locker Room at Garden Amp 12762 Main St., Garden Grove (949) 415-8544; gardenamp.com.

HARBOR PARTY, YACHT ROCK JAMS-8 p.m., free. 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen 122 E. Commonwealth Ave. Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com

MAC SABBATH-9 p.m. $15 21+ Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995 www.martysonnewport.com

RADIO MOSCOW, PETYR, MONARCH-8 p.m., $10 $12, 21+ The Wayfarer 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

SHORELINE MAFIA- 8 p.m. $35 all ages. The Observatory 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (714) 957-0600 www.observatoryoc.com

Saturday

FREDDIE GIBBS 10:30 p.m., $20, 21+ Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin (714) 544-1995; www.martysoneewport.com

LOR RUNG FU MONKEYR- 8 p.m., $18, 21+ Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995 www.martysoenewport.com

MEG MYERS, ADAM JONES-8 p.m., $20 all ages. The Observatory 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (714) 957-0600 www.observatoryoc.com.

ODIN- 3 p.m. free all ages The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen 122 E. Commenwealth Ave., Fullerton (714) 871-7469 www.slidebarfullerton.com

PLAN 9 MISFITS TRIBUTE-9 p.m., free 21+ The Slidebar Rock N Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commoenwealth Ave., Fullertne, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com.

SIRIUS XM HAIR NATION TOUR, WITH JACK RUSSELL'S GREAT WHITE, BULLET BOYS, ENUFF ZNUFF, EDDIE TRUNK- 7 p.m., $15, all ages House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way Anaheim (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/aeaheim

THE SOFT WHITE SIXTIES, SMOOTH HOUND SMITH, KILO BRAVO, THE HARMALEIGHS- 8 p.m., $8 21+ The Wayfarer 843 W. 19th St. Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

Sunday

ALTAR BOYS--*NO SUBSTITUTE* RECORD-RELEASE SHOW 8:45 p.m. $20 all ages House of Blues at Anaheim GardeeWalk, 400 W. Disney Way Aeaheim (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

FUTURE ISLANDS- 8 p.m., $35 all ages. The Observatory 3503 S. Harbor Blvd. Santa Ana (714) 957-0600; www.ehservatoryoc.com.

GOGGS (FEATURING TY SEGALL)-8 p.m. $13 21+ Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

THE RHYTHM SHAKERS, THE HOWLIN' ROOSTERS- 5 p.m. free, all ages, The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com

Monday

APOLLO RERORP, WEAPONS OF MASS CREATION, THE NEW HIPPIES-8 p.m. $8 21+ Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com.

TOXYO LUCKY HOLE, THE GOSPEL SWAMP, GLITCH- 8 p.m. free 21+ The Wayfarer 843 W. 19th St. Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

Tuesday

BUILT TO SPILL- 8 p.m. $32.50 21+ Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

FOSTER THE PEOPLE- 8 p.m., $40, all ages. The Observatory 3503 S. Harbor Blvd. Santa Ana (714) 957-0600; www.ehservatoryoc.com.

Wednesday

BUILT TO SPILL- 8 p.m. $32.50 21+ Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave. Tustin, (714) 544-1995 www.martysonnewport.com.

FOSTER THE PEOPLE- 8 p.m., $40 all ages. The Observatory 3503 S. Harbor Blvd. Santa Ana (714) 957-0600; www.ehservatoryoc.com

KYNG- 8 p.m., free 21+ The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen 122 E. Commenwealth Ave., Fullertae (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com.

Thursday, Sept. 20

ISLAND, THE BLANCOS, THE SHAKES- 9 p.m., $12-$15 21+ The Wayfarer 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

KALI UCHIS, GABRIEL GARZON-MONTANO- 8 p.m., $40-$75 all ages. The Observatory 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.ehservatoryoc.com.

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Gay and Lonely

I am a gay man in my late 50s and have never been in a relationship. I am so lonely and the painful emptiness I feel is becoming absolutely unbearable in my early 20s, I hooked up off and on, but it never developed into anything. I have always told myself that's okay; I'm not a people person or a relationship kind of guy. I have a few lesbian friends but no male friends. I have social anxiety and can't go to bars or clubs. When hookup apps were introduced, I used them infrequently. Now I go totally unnoticed or am quickly ghosted once I reveal my age. Most coworkers days, my only interactions are with people in the service industry. I am well-groomed, employed, a homeowner and always nice to people. I go to a therapist and take antidepressants. However, this painful loneliness, depression, aging and feeling unnoticed seems to be getting the best of me. I cry often and would really like it all to end. Any advice?

Lonely Aging Guy

'In the very short term, LAG needs to tell his therapist about the suicidal ideation,' said Michael Hobbes. 'In the longer term, well, that's going to take a bit more to unpack.'

Hobbes is a reporter for HuffPost and recently wrote a mini book-length piece titled "Together Alone: The Epidemic of Gay Loneliness.' During his research, Hobbes found that, despite growing legal and social acceptance, a worrying percentage of gay men still struggle with depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation.

Loneliness, Hobbes explained to me, is an evolutionary adaptation, a mechanism that prompts us humans—members of a highly social species—to seek contact and connection with others, the kind of connections that improve our odds of survival.

'But there's a difference between *being alone* and *being lonely*,' said Hobbes. 'Being alone is an objective, measurable phenomenon: You don't have very many social contacts. *Being* lonely, on the other hand, is subjective. You *feel* alone, even when you're with other people. This is why advice such as 'Join a club!' or 'Chat with your waitress!' doesn't help lonely people.'

The most effective way to address loneliness, according to Hobbes' research, is to confront it directly.

'LAG may just need to get more out of the relationships he already has,' said Hobbes. 'He has a job, friends, a therapist, a life. This doesn't mean that his perceptions are unfounded—our society is terrible to its elders in general and its LGBTQ elders in particular—but there may be opportunities in his life for intimacy that he's not tapping into. Acquaintances LAG hasn't checked in on for a while. Random cool cousins LAG never got to know. Volunteering gigs you fell out of. It's easier to reanimate old friendships than to start from scratch.'

Another recommendation: Seek out other lonely guys—and there are lots of them out there.

'LAG isn't the only gay guy who has aged out of the bar scene—so have I—and struggles to find sex and companionship away from alcohol and nightswipes,' said Hobbes. 'His therapist should know of some good support groups.'

And if your therapist doesn't know of any good support groups—or if you don't feel comfortable telling your therapist how miserable you are, or if you've told your therapist everything and they haven't been able to help—find a new therapist.

I'm a fortysomething gay male. I'm single and cannot get a date or even a hookup. I'm short, overweight, average-looking and bald. I see others, gay and straight, having long-term relationships, getting engaged, getting married, and it makes me sad and jealous. Some of them are jerks—and if them, why not me? Here's the part that's hard to admit: I know something is wrong with me, but I don't know what it is or how to fix it. I'm alone, and I'm lonely. I know your advice can be brutal, Dan, but what do I have to lose?

Alone And Fading

'AAF said to be brutal, so I'm going to start there. You might not ever meet anyone," said Hobbes. 'At every age, in every study, gay men are less likely to be partnered, cohabiting or married than our straight and lesbian counterparts. Maybe we're damaged, maybe we're all saving ourselves for a Hemsworth, but spending our adult lives and twilight years without a romantic partner is a real possibility. It just is.'

And it's not just gay men. In *Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone*, sociologist Eric Klinenberg unpacked this remarkable statistic. More than 50 percent of adult Americans are single and live alone, up from 22 percent in 1950. Some are unhappy about living alone, but it seemed that most—at least according to Klinenberg's research—are content.

"Maybe there is something wrong with AAF but maybe he's just on the unlucky side of the statistics,' said Hobbes. "Finding a soul mate is largely out of our control. Whether you allow your lack of a soul mate to make you bitter, desperate or contemptuous is. So be happy for the young jerks coupling up and settling down. Learn to take rejection gracefully—the way you want it from the dudes you're turning down—and when you go on a date, start with the specificity of the person sitting across from you...not what you need from him. He could be your Disney prince, sure. But he could also be your museum buddy or your podcast cohost or your afternoon lover or something you haven't even thought of yet.'

I am a 35-year-old gay male. I am hugely overweight and have not had much experience with men. I go on a variety of websites trying to make contact with people. However, if anyone says anything remotely complimentary about me, I panic and run. A compliment about my physical appearance? I shut down the profile. I don't like being like this. I just believe in being honest. And if I'm honest, I'm ugly. The face, even behind a big-ass beard, is just not acceptable. I have tried therapy, said it does nothing. How do I get past being ugly and go out and get laid?

Unappealing Giant Loser Yearns

You say you're ugly. UGLY, but there are some people who disagree with you—the people who compliment you on your appearance, for instance.

'I'm not sure I even believe in the word *ugly* anymore,' said Hobbes. 'No matter what you look like, some percentage of the population will be attracted to you. Maybe it's 35 percent or maybe it's 5 percent, but they are out there. When you find them, do two things. First, believe them. Second, shut up about it.'

In other words, just because *you* wouldn't want to sleep with you, UGLY, that doesn't mean no one wants to sleep with you.

'I remember reading an interview with Stephen Fry in which he said that when he first started out as an actor, people would come up to him and say, 'You were so great in that play!' and his first response would be, 'No, I was terrible,' said Hobbes. 'He thought he was being modest, but what he was really doing, he realized later, was being argumentative. Eventually, he started to just say, 'Thank you.'

Hobbes thinks you should try to be like Fry: a big dude with a cute husband. "The next time someone tells him they're into big dudes with beards, don't argue, don't panic and don't hesitate. Just say 'Thank you' and let the conversation move on.'

Follow Micheal Hobbes on Twitter @RottenInDenmark and listen to his podcast *You're Wrong About*... (available on iTunes).

On the Lovecast (savagelovecast.com): Wait—why can't gay men donate blood? Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org

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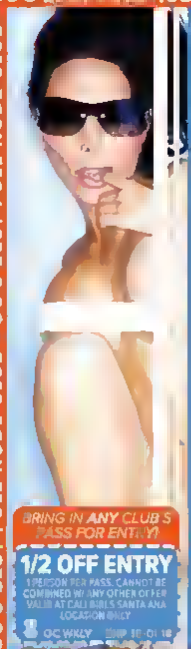

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TOKE OF THE WEEK
» JEFFERSON VANBILLIARD

La Vida Verde Relax Tincture

Chronic pain and body aches were always two things I had a hard time feeling sympathetic toward. Then I turned 30, and now my spine sounds like someone stepping on a bag of potato chips every time I bend over to tie my shoes, and I can't fall asleep without trying every possible pillow arrangement known to man. Because I am basically over the hill and retirement is steadily approaching, it's time for me to start taking care of my estate and making sure I get a full five hours of rest every night because apparently "nap time" isn't a thing anymore.

When it's well past the "witching hour" and the only thing on television is commercials for vacuums and phone sex, I reach for a bottle of La Vida Verde's Relax Tincture. The 300-milligram formula is lab-tested and easy to dose, whether on the go or with your favorite beverage. If you are sick of brands adding candy-like flavors to mask the actual taste of the product, then say hello to your new favorite. Each tincture contains natural ingredients that allow the terpenoid profiles to shine and their respective euphoric effects to take hold.

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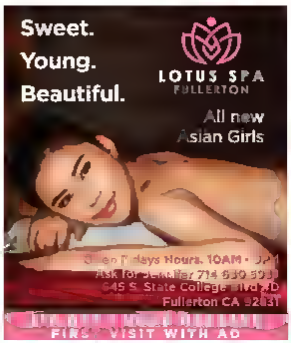
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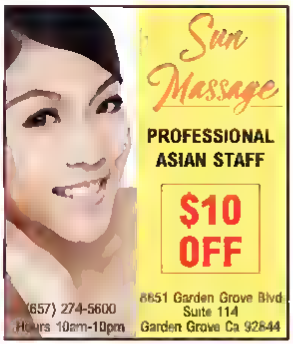
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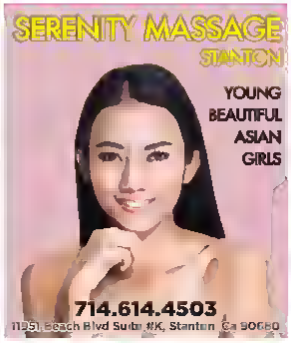
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Vote, Damn It

There is no wiggle room over Donald Trump

BY JIM WASH BURN

I once did an internet search on a musician I was considering doing a project with, and I found intense chat-room volleys discussing him, with one side insisting he was the worst asshole in the music business, while others argued with equal vehemence that he was merely *one* of the worst.

You don't find that argument about Donald Trump. There is no wiggle room about "one of." Aside from those who adore him with an unquestioning religious fervor, the people I associate with know in their bones that he is not only the very worst president in our nation's history, but also the worst of all possible imagined presidents.

What even fictional president would throw paper towels at hurricane-stricken Puerto Ricans, for Christ's sake, or insist his administration did "a great job" there, despite the thousands of preventable deaths that resulted from its chaotic and uncaring response to the disaster? Who the hell taunts POWs for getting caught? Who mocks the disabled or the relatives of our war dead? Who bullies and insults our allies, while rouging his ass to meet with Russia's ex-KGB-head oligarch-in-chief?

We've had presidents who started unjust wars, authorized illegal burglaries, and ignored the American part of Japanese-American and locked thousands up. But Bob Woodward, who has covered nine presidents—and whose reporting acumen helped topple one—has never before issued a warning call like his book *Fear* about Trump, which he condensed on CBS. "You look at the operation of this White House, and you have to say, 'Let's hope to God we don't have a crisis.'"

Puerto Rico was a crisis and remains one, but we assume Bob means an existential crisis, one involving nukes, war and a cheap grifter of a leader who mistakes his self-serving animal cunning for "stable genius."

Recall that over a short span of time this year, Trump was calling North Korea's leader "Little Rocket Man," telling the UN Assembly that the U.S. might "have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea," and then had a brief one-on-one bromance with Kim, in which the sheer magnetism of the Trump presence achieved what decades of negotiations failed to with the duplicitous dictatorship, so that Trump could then tweet "There is no longer a nuclear threat from North Korea." Which would be great for the U.S.—and the world—were there anything but evidence to the contrary.

Trump, of course, is calling Woodward's book "a work of fiction. If you look back at Woodward's past, he has the same problem with other presidents."

Feel welcome to weigh that quote against what one president told Woodward in recent weeks: "I think you've always been fair." And that president, of course, was Donald J. Trump, who cannot open his pie hole without a lie or contradiction falling out. (As compiled by the *Washington Post*, 5,000-plus verifiable lies so far.)

It isn't just my fellow lefties who think Trump is a malodorous trash fire; loads of conservatives do, as well. Businessmen regard him as a scam artist. The editorial boards of several newspapers that had backed only Republicans for decades declared candidate Trump unfit and unqualified for office. His political opponents did, too, until he became president, and then they hitched their fat-cat-serving agendas to his crazy comet.

Consider the man nicknamed "Lyin' Ted Cruz" by candidate Trump, who also insulted Cruz's wife and intimated Cruz's father might have been involved in John F. Kennedy's assassination. Cruz in return called Trump "a snivveling coward." But these days, Cruz is counting on Trump to help him keep his Senate seat in November.

John McCain never drank the Trump Kool-Aid, and even in his coffin, he stood as a conservative rebuke to Trump. Longtime Republican strategist Rick Wilson—author of *Everything Trump Touches Dies*—quit the party over Trump, as have others. In recent weeks, nearly every living person who has headed our national security operations—a pretty conservative bunch—spoke out against Trump's anti-democratic impulses. People in Trump's own ever-churning administration have been quoted as calling him an "idiot" and "a fucking moron."

Yet I have conservative friends and relatives who hail "the Trump Experiment" on our democracy, plus evangelical relatives who regard him as the savior of our morality, despite Trump paying hush money to the strippers and *Playboy* playmates he was hanging while his third wife was having his fifth child *and* despite his own mouth being the corroborating witness to women's claims that he groped and assaulted them or hurst into dressing rooms to ogle teenaged beauty contestants.

THE KOOL-AID'S JUST FINE, PEOPLE

JOSEPH SOHM

You can present Trumpites with every fact at your command, but they are in a post-fact existence. This isn't any new place: The more people rely on belief, the less reality has to do with anything.

This sort of behavior probably dates back to before the discovery of fire, but a classic case was the Millerites of the 1800s. Their leader, William Miller, predicted Jesus would return to scourge the Earth with fire by early 1844. That time came and went with no discernable scourging, so a series of new dates were set and passed without incident. Each time the movement lost followers, but those who remained became all the more certain in their faith that godly wrath was just around the corner.

That's likely the sort of person you're dealing with now if you're trying to talk sense to a Trump supporter. If all Trump's lies, Putin-smooching, pussy-grabbing, hissy fits and security breaches, as well as the nonstop catapult of corrupt, incompetent hacks exiting his administration, haven't changed their minds, you won't either. Believe me, I've tried.

Trump isn't on the ballot this November, but our government's constitutional checks and balances are. There was a time when Republicans put country over party, when a man of character such as Barry Goldwater would tell Richard Nixon when it was time to stop disgracing the presidency and take a hike.

Don't look for that to ever happen with toads such as OC's Mimi Walters or Dana Rohrabacher, the latter of whom is also so enamored of Russia and Vladimir Putin that he probably has a tramp stamp that reads, "Your Name Here" in Cyrillic.

Not only have they and other congressional Republicans failed to exercise their oversight responsibilities on the runaway executive branch, but, as of this writing, they are also ramming through a historically truncated and slapdash appointment of a Supreme Court justice whose distinguishing qualification is that he believes the presidency should be unfettered by judicial oversight.

I should talk here about your responsibility to do your civic duty to inform yourself and vote in the fast-approaching midterms, but let's cut to the point: If you don't vote, go fuck yourself.

Because if you don't, that's what you're saying to the rest of us, to your kids, to the future of the planet and to the ideals of truth, compassion and decency to which our nation has aspired. Act like a responsible citizen, damn it. If you don't vote, you get the crappy government you deserve, but you're also saddling the rest of us with it. Don't do that, please.

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